

For you people working on your family tree, I have included the following article, and also a relationship chart emailed to me by Lorraine Edwards. Thanks Lorraine.

Something to think about By CECIL HUMPHERY-SMITH Principal of the Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies

Interpretation of terms to denote degrees of relationship is often of importance as some of our examples have shown. We often mean something different by terms like brother and cousin nowadays. In confraternities, union and religious orders, brother does not mean a natural relationship. In that sense it was often used particularly in the Society of Friends, among evangelical and reformed churchmen after the Reformation just as it continues to be amongst Catholics throughout the history of the Christian church. When used in wills and other documents it may mean the husband of a sister or the brother of a wife, the husband of a sister-in-law, a half-brother, a step-brother or, naturally, another son of one's parents. Father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law and daughter-in-law have usually indicated relationships by marriage rather than by blood, but equally they can refer to step relationships or natural ones. Brother-in-law may mean either sister's husband or wife's brother. The term cousin, as we know from our readings of Shakespeare, was most commonly used to indicate almost any degree of relationship or kinship by blood or marriage outside the immediate family, even being used for nephews and nieces, though today it indicates that the persons who are cousins have a progenitor common to each of them.

Natural was usually used to mean that the relationship was legally accepted as a relationship by blood rather than one introduced by marriage or adoption. By the 17th century it was not used so often to indicate illegitimacy, baseborn or bastard being the more common expression. The Latin word *nepos* strictly meaning a grandson or in wider connotation a descendant child gives rise to our term nephew and may well mean grand-daughters as well as grandchildren, though for the most part of course nephew is the son of a brother or sister and occasionally a niece.

There are many ways in which an individual may acquire an alias: by the adoption of the surname of the putative or alleged or reputed father of an illegitimate child, by inheritance of a named estate, usually through a mother or grandmother, from a step-father or by adoption. It was also not uncommon for soldiers and sailors to enter the services with one or more aliases which could subsequently be discarded should they wish to leave for any reason. Of course, it was not uncommon for criminals to make use of more than one name: Aliases, often in the form of nicknames, might be used at will for an individual, or more commonly by others referring to the person. An alias might ultimately become the surname through usage and circumstance.

Even the terms "the elder" or "senior" and "junior" came to be used as aliases and by contraction th'elder" gave rise to the surname Hilder. It is not safe to assume that senior and junior refer to father and son; Uncles and Nephews or cousins might be distinguished in this way. This was common before the advent of extra Christian names or middle names. Indeed, the senior and junior might not be related at all. It is also important to consider that William Smith Junior might ultimately become William Smith Senior! – And his "now wife" was his present or current wife, to the exclusion of all others that he might have had or subsequently have. The term was frequently used so as to distinguish children.

WHO IS MY SECOND COUSIN TWICE REMOVED?

